



# CARING CAMPUS / FACULTY

Caring Campus Faculty: Improving Student Connectedness. If students don't feel connected to the college they attend, they are far less likely to return next term, regardless of the academic interventions and support services the college has provided. Community colleges are working hard to implement research-based interventions and supports that have been demonstrated to increase educational outcomes. Yet, the needle on student success is not moving in a meaningful way. It's time to look beyond academic and student services support solutions to explore other aspects of the student experience that contribute to success. It's time to focus on connectedness.

Throughout our community college work, students tell us they want to feel cared about. They want to connect with an educator who looks like them. But barring that, they want someone who "gets" them. This is particularly salient as community college students are more diverse than ever and our current ranks of faculty have yet to catch up. This means that community college educators must do all they can to demonstrate they understand the lives of their students. Making connections is a powerful motivator for students to succeed. As the Aspen Institute notes, "A culture of caring has become a hallmark of excellent community colleges."

There are over 120 Caring Campus Colleges in 21 states, serving over 1 million students.

## **Faculty Attitudes and Experiences**

- Increased communication and relationship-building within and across departments
- Faculty reaffirm identity as contributors to student success
- Increased awareness of achievement gaps
- Increased faculty job satisfaction

## **Intermediate Student Outcomes**

- Students build relationships with faculty members
- Students understand expectations and can recover from mistakes
- Students feel a sense of belonging
- *Benefits disproportionately affect students with greater needs*

## **Final Student Outcomes**

- Increased student course performance
- Increased student persistence
- *Benefits disproportionately affect students with greater needs*

## **College Culture Outcomes**

- Changes to college structures and systems (e.g., streamlined processes, channels for staff to provide input).
- Greater institutional capacity to implement reform
- More positive staff and faculty attitudes (e.g., identity as contributors to student success, job satisfaction).
- Better relationships between and among staff, faculty, college leadership, "middle management," and students.

## **Faculty Behaviors**

- Learn student names
- Transparent course and syllabus design
- One-on-one meetings with students
- Assignments early and often
- Monitor student progress
- Compassionate expectations